**Focus Group: Early Childhood**

**6 October 2011**

**9- 10.30am**

**Data feedback**

* NQF is important to underpin work
* Need to focus on what makes a difference before school
* Delay in seeing early childhood services prior to starting school and then having to start again once starting school.
* Demands on nursing service when there are delays for developmental assessments. How do these children cope.
* Need to link in with antenatal services to start relationship early. In UK MCH equivalent service linked with families during pregnancy.

**Key Questions Discussion**

* + - 1. **What should our priorities be for the next 3 years in early childhood?**
* Knowledge and skill required by ECEC staff in Children’s Services to deliver quality programs- NQF
* Training for staff needs to reflect the required skills and knowledge
* What is the tool that actions this? Staff- quality, knowledge & skills
* National Quality Agenda needs to underpin early years strategies- NQS, EYLF, UA & Transition
* Engagement between EYS and school in implementing principles of VEYLDF to support continuity of learning between early years and schools
* Partnerships between agencies to pool resources- less duplication and common initiatives
* Early Years impacts outcomes more significantly than any other period. More resources, funding required
* Participation in the early years at Quality early childhood settings ( family day care, playgroups, kindergarten, long day care and OSHS for all children
* NQF implemented
* Advocate for resourcing quality staff who are knowledgeable and skilled
* Link Childcare benefit dollars to MCH earlier than 3.5years.
* Key age and stage visits- increase attendance
* Identify early, treat early
* Creation of better system between services eg currently when being picked up on ECIS waitlist, other services (such as community health) stop.
* Parenting classes for student in secondary schools
  + - 1. **Where can we make the biggest gains?**
* Focus on where to target- 2yrs MCHC Key Age and Stage visits- to capture children with additional needs rather than wait til school
* Quality Early Childhood Education under 5 will make a difference to outcomes.
* Focus on child- recognise and respect the family as a unit- however we focus on child- welfare focus for family
* Parents are crucial and must be involved in early years learning
* MCH Key Age and stage visits. Target 12months to 2 years, identification and intervention awareness
* By recognising signs early
* Ensuring Koorie families are engaged with Koorie engagement team
* Increasing participation at 3.5yr Key Age/Stage check
* Pre-service training of education staff- preschool, primary teachers re child development, early identification of developmental problems and knowledge/incentive to refer early
  + - 1. **What do we need to do to ‘make it stick’**
* Increase parent/caregiver capacity to provide enriching play/learning environments for children eg primary coaching models for ECIS workers
* School nurses do 3.5yr checks to allow earlier identification of issues
* Centralised service provision (locally) of education advisors/ paeds, nurse, OT, SP, Psych to allow access for families.